

FINAL

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

1. Name

historic Evansville College
University of Evansville
and/or common Administration Hall, President's House, and Circle

2. Location

street & number 1800 Lincoln Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Evansville N/A vicinity of congressional district 8th
state Indiana code 18 county Vanderburgh code 163

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Trustees of the University of Evansville
street & number 1800 Lincoln Avenue
city, town Evansville N/A vicinity of state Indiana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Vanderburgh County Recorder
street & number City-County Administration Building
city, town Evansville state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Indiana Historic Sites and Structures has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no
date June 1981 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☒ local
depository for survey records Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology
city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The three features comprising the historic Evansville College campus are situated as part of a 72-acre educational complex known since 1967 as the University of Evansville. The Administration Hall, President's House, and Circle form a compact but prominent grouping on the north side of Lincoln Avenue approximately two miles from the Evansville Downtown. The prevailing surrounding landuse is residential and suburban. Conceived in large measure as the nucleus of a 1921 campus master plan, the buildings and grounds of the original college are unified by their materials, style of architecture, extensive greenswards and umbrageous groves, and consistent scale and detailing.

The focus of the Evansville College campus is the Administration Hall. Constructed of clay tile with Indiana limestone ashlar, the building is three stories in height with a tall (78') central tower on the facade. The Collegiate Gothic style favored by the college's trustees and their architect--Miller, Fullenwider, and Dowling of Chicago--is apparent in the building's Tudor Gothic moldings, carved stonework, Middle Decorated tower, and informalized surface treatment. The limestone cladding is notable for its random, articulated quality, the ends of the stones being broken instead of evenly sawn. A pair of end-wings surmounted by transverse gable roofs are in the same advance plane as the central tower on the 174' long facade. The roof surfaces are covered in a red clay pantile. Originally used as classrooms and faculty offices as well as an administration building, the rectangularly massed structure contains a rear wing which once housed an auditorium for the college. The 1922 hall has been variously remodeled over the years, with the most impact occurring on the windows (a smaller glazed surface topped by a blank panel instead of the original transom) and in the finish and arrangement of the interior spaces. All in all, however, the building has enjoyed a high degree of sympathetic maintenance and the current administration regards the integrity of the building as a priority.

The Administration Hall is sited at the terminus of an axis created by the main entrance to the campus on Lincoln and by the vista allowed by the large open space to the south of the building known as the Circle. This landscaped area was regarded as the institution's centralizing feature in the 1921 plan, and to a large degree this purpose has been observed. The Circle of the Evansville College acts not only to heighten the impact of the Administration Hall and other buildings around it, but also to promote interaction among members of the collegiate community in the manner of the quadrangles of Yale or Academical Village of Jefferson's University of Virginia. Its flat, grassy expanse is encircled by large native deciduous trees.

The third element of the historic campus--the President's House--followed the spirit of the 1921 plan but was nevertheless an important departure. The original campus plan did not envision a separate, free-standing residence for its president. The Circle was to be flanked on the east and west by two subordinant quads formed by dormitory and classroom buildings. The 1929 President's House, however, was placed well to the west of the central quadrangle and nearer to Lincoln Avenue than the 1921 campus plan had indicated for any of the planned buildings. The two-story edifice preserved the unity of the original plan, however, as far as materials and architectural style were concerned. The Tudor Revival structure is clad in the same Bedford limestone as the Administration Hall, treated in the same random, articulated manner. Anderson and Veatch, the well-known architects and builders, drew plans for an asymmetrically massed dwelling complete with casement windows in the Tudor style with drop moldings, high pitched gable roofs and dormers, and a Gothic-arched recessed entranceway.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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Since 1929 and the completion of the President's House, the development of other college buildings has followed the spirit--but not the letter--of the 1921 Miller, Fullenwider, and Dowling plan. The Great Depression hit Evansville College particularly hard, and it was not until the late-1930s that the trustees and administration were able to consider continuation of the building program begun some twenty years earlier and represented by the Administration Hall, the President's House, and the Circle. The Second World War deferred these plans even further. With the end of the war, the late-1940s became a time of renewed growth and planning. The Indianapolis firm of McGuire and Shook was employed to revise the 1921 campus plan, and the construction of several post-war buildings followed. These structures have maintained the atmosphere established by the original planners by adopting a modernized Gothic in the style of the buildings, a sensitivity to the original concept of interconnecting quadrangles, and an eye toward continuity in scale and material.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1921 and 1929

Builder/Architect Miller, Fullenwider, and Dowling
Anderson and Veatch

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the original plan of Evansville College and the three features constructed before the watershed of the Great Depression can be traced in several ways. Certainly the architectural merits of the historic campus are apparent. Moreover, as the region's principal institution of higher education for some sixty years, the college has left its mark through associations with prominent faculty, administrators and alumni. Yet there are other important, perhaps more subtle grounds for recognizing the significance of the Evansville College and these lie in the college's special meaning as a phenomenon of the Progressive Era.

The genesis of the Evansville College is rooted in the political and social mood of the city after the turn of the century. Evansville had become by 1900 an industrial and commercial power in Indiana second only to Indianapolis. Its well-known furniture and lumber concerns were nearing their zenith and other diverse industries--automobiles and engine manufactories, for instance--were beginning their ascendancy. In 1912, citizens put a Progressive mayor, Benjamin Bosse, into office. A former businessman himself, Bosse embarked on an aggressive program of capital improvements in support of commerce, transportation, parks, and so on. Bosse was also instrumental in promoting the establishment and operation of a greater Evansville Chamber of Commerce, an organization which became a complementary vehicle for implementing the mayor's various plans.

Bosse and other prominent citizens began turning their attention to the creation of a four-year liberal arts college for Evansville in about 1916 and for reasons which were only partly altruistic. Boosters were painfully aware of the city's poverty where higher education was concerned. Progressives looked to colleges and universities to furnish Culture for their communities in the classic sense of the liberal bourgeoisie, but also for the economic good that could come by having such an influential institution in their midst.

If Evansville's Progressives had not had the good fortune of being able to rescue a failing Methodist college in 1917, then they would have invented it. Moore's Hill College had had a checkered history from its founding in Moore's Hill, Indiana, in 1854 until its darkest hour following a disastrous fire in 1914. It looked to be certain that Moore's Hill would have to close its doors for good when in April 1917, negotiations began between Bosse's Evansville Chamber of Commerce and the Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church.

The College's Evansville backers--especially a far-sighted businessman by the name of George S. Clifford--pointed out that the city was in a unique position to support a college and that the city's Progressive values would be served. Clifford prepared a map showing graphically that no other accredited colleges would compete for its students. A \$1 million "centennial college campaign" was launched (with Bosse at the lead) to erect and endow a college from the ashes of Moore's Hill, half to be raised in Evansville and

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Vanderburgh County and half by the Indiana Conference. Recruitment of the college's trustees would be shared by the Methodists and the Evansville Chamber of Commerce. The "higher intellectual tone" for the city made possible by the establishment of the college would be augmented by more realistic, tangible benefits. Promoters were ready to point out the amount of money that would be annually generated by those connected with a college. Its curriculum would contain not only the traditional liberal arts courses but also would feature offerings for salesmanship, factory management, and mechanical arts. Local newspapers were impressed by the promise to establish courses in--naturally--journalism. Young mothers could study the latest methods of home management and baby care, and others were assured that a college would help to keep Evansville's young people from leaving the city for college in other communities, perhaps never to return. The effect on promoting surrounding real estate would be felicitous. All of this was a far cry from the 17th century quest for an educated ministry, Jefferson's plan to perfect a rational democracy, or Morrill's system of "useful" state colleges: Evansville College was to be a 20th century institution in every way.

Bosse and his Chamber won the support of the Methodists and of the Evansville community. A preliminary campus plan was drawn up by local architect F. Manson Gilbert in mid-1917 for fund-raising purposes, and the search for a site began. By the fall of 1918, the site search committee had narrowed its choices to the Lincoln Avenue tract. Firms were invited to submit comprehensive campus plans guided by a program calling for the arrangement of buildings along the lines of Yale's quads but in an unspecified style. Bosse headed the building committee and gained approval for his plan to select the architect for the new college on the basis of experience and ability, not competitiveness.

At least one entry submitted by local architect Clifford Shopbell & Company in December 1918 eschewed Collegiate Gothic in favor of a style associated with the classical of McKim's Columbia of a decade earlier. The winning entry, however, played upon the Anglophilia of the college's founders. The Chicago firm of Miller, Fullenwider, and Dowling produced an accepted plan for Evansville College in February 1921 which had by then almost become a cliché for American colleges. Gothic, ivy-covered buildings erected out of naturalistic, modulated materials and arranged in quadrangles provided an instant collegiate aura and a palpable connection to the western world's models of collegiate life in Oxford and Cambridge. No less an authority than Ralph Adams Cram commented in the student newspaper when seeing the Administration Hall shortly after its dedication in June 1922: "Its style is Collegiate Gothic, yet it has a beautiful balance between its tower and its other masses. I should describe it as modern in every sense of the word and one of the most beautiful of its kind in the country." (Cram was in Evansville for design work on a new Lutheran church building.) The Circle was to be the setting for the Administration Hall and the nexus for subordinant residential and academic quads to the east and west, a total of 22 buildings planned to be connected by Gothic-arched walkways. A Science Hall was scheduled for construction according to the designs of the Chicago firm at the same time as the Administration Hall, but plans were abandoned for this second building when bids were received in the spring of 1921. Administration Hall was renamed in 1980 to honor Ralph E. Olmsted, the college's long-time business manager.

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The President's House was in the penumbra of the 1921 plan. Though sited out of keeping with the original scheme, it maintained the Gothic flavor promoted by the architects and it preceeded by at least a generation the modern phase of campus planning and construction. Its designers and builders--Anderson and Veatch--produced a type of building for the college which was fast becoming their trademark. Commodiously planned and well-detailed dwellings by Anderson and Veatch were going up all over the newest sections of Evansville in the 1920s, particularly the fashionable area in the vicinity of the Evansville College. Just as had been predicted, the neighborhoods around the college took on a trendy tone. An entire subdivision totally planned, designed, and built by the firm was known as Lincolnshire (see Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Survey) which went up in the late-1920s just to the south and the west of the college. Though Mayor Bosse did not live to see the 1922 dedication of the Administration Hall, he was warmly remembered for his tireless efforts in connection with the College, if not for the two modern concrete highways he had constructed to the college grounds to permit access to it and to the city's newest well-to-do section.

The list of prominent persons associated with the College is long. A good many faculty members distinguished themselves while in Evansville and went on to prominence with other larger institutions. Graduates include a former U.S. Senator, Vance Hartke, and an engineering student, Lester Driggers, who was later in charge of our nation's Saturn rocket project. The many citizens involved in the promotion and survival of the college reads like a Who Was Who in Evansville in the early 20th century. Aside from Bosse and Colonel McCurdy (head of Hercules Buggy and Hercules Engine), the name of George S. Clifford stands out as the "father of Evansville College." Clifford and his wife, Emily Orr Clifford took a profound and active interest in the founding and development of the college, and it was the Cliffords for whom the later library was named.

9. Major Bibliographical References

see Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ~~less than 10~~ 7 acres

Quadrangle name Evansville South

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

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1	6	4	5	3	3	0	0	4	2	0	2	5	7	1	5
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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Douglas L. Stern, City Historic Preservation Officer

organization Evansville Dept of Metropolitan Development date August 1981

street & number 216 Washington Avenue

telephone 812/426-5487

city or town Evansville

state Indiana

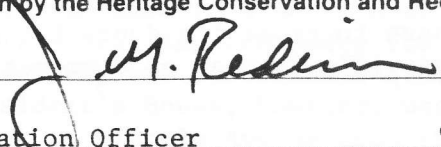
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 11-24-82

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Evansville City Directories.

Evansville College. Bulletins. July 1920 and June 1929.

_____. Dedication of Administration Hall. June 1922.

Evansville College Building and Photographic Files. University of Evansville Archives, Clifford Memorial Library.

Evansville Courier. 11 March 1917, 17 March 1917, 22 April 1917, 29 April 1917, 7 September 1918, 13 December 1918, 5 January 1919, 13 February 1921, 16 April 1922, 16 June 1922, 17 June 1922, 19 October 1923, 22 March 1924, 6 June 1928, 14 October 1928, 17 February 1929, and 12 June 1929.

Evansville Journal. 9 May 1921.

Interview with Ralph E. Olmsted, 30 July 1981, Evansville, Indiana.

Olmsted, Ralph E. From Institute to University. Evansville: University of Evansville, 1973.

Russ, W. E., Letter to Alfred F. Hughes, 20 June 1917 and 22 January 1920.

Trustees of Evansville College. Minutes, 20 November 1919, 26 January 1920, 8 June 1920, 15 February 1921. University of Evansville Archives, Clifford Memorial Library.

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Boundary description for the Evansville College Historic Area:

Commencing at a point in Evansville, Vanderburgh County, Indiana where the north right-of-way line of Lincoln Avenue intersects with the east right-of-way line of South Rotherwood Avenue; thence from said point of beginning north along the eastern right-of-way line of South Rotherwood Avenue for a distance of three-hundred and eighty-two (382) feet; thence due east one-hundred and seventy-eight (178) feet; thence due south one-hundred and eighty-four (184) feet; thence due east one-hundred and ninety-one (191) feet; thence due north three-hundred and twenty (320) feet; thence due east one-hundred and twenty-one (121) feet; thence due north one-hundred and sixty-six (166) feet; thence due east one-hundred and ninety-eight (198) feet; thence due south one-hundred and sixty-six (166) feet; thence due east one-hundred and forty-nine (149) feet; thence due south five-hundred and eighteen (518) feet to a point in the north right-of-way line of Lincoln Avenue; thence west along the north right-of-way line of Lincoln Avenue a distance of eight-hundred and twenty-five (825) feet to the place of beginning.